

## CLAIM AMENDMENTS

1. (Currently amended) A coupling element for ~~the combining of~~ at least two elongate lamps ~~with in each case two ends, the first lamp and the second lamp each having a~~ respective exterior wall and a respective end, the coupling element having a ~~continuous receptacle area which is provided for receiving an end of each lamp, which receptacle area comprises a reflector.~~ an interior wall defining a receptacle volume having a first region conforming to the exterior wall of the first lamp adjacent the end of the first lamp; and having a second region conforming to the exterior wall of the second lamp adjacent the end of the second lamp; the coupling element to retain the end of the first lamp end adjacent the end of the second lamp; wherein the first region further includes a light reflective surface facing the end of the first lamp and the second region further includes a light reflective surface facing the end of the second lamp; the receptacle further defining a light transmissive aperture commonly adjacent to the end of the first lamp and to the end of the second lamp receiving light from the first region and the second region.
2. (Canceled) The coupling element as claimed in claim 1, which is provided for receiving lamps with a tubular lamp vessel, the receptacle area being adapted to the tubular curvature of the outer side of the lamp vessel to be received.
3. (Canceled) The coupling element as claimed in claim 2, the receptacle area being realized by the inner area of a half-shell.
4. (Canceled) The coupling element as claimed in claim 2, the receptacle area being realized by a hole in the coupling element.
5. (Canceled) The coupling element as claimed in claim 2, the receptacle area being realized by the inner area of a hollow cylinder.

6. (Canceled) The coupling element as claimed in claim 1, the reflector being realized by a reflective area.
7. (Canceled) The coupling element as claimed in claim 1, the reflector being realized by a diffusely reflective area.
8. (Canceled) The coupling element as claimed in claim 1, the reflector being realized by a reflective foil arranged on the receptacle area.
9. (Canceled) The coupling element as claimed in claim 1, the coupling element being developed as a lamp base.
10. (Currently amended) The coupling element as claimed in claim 1, wherein the end of the first lamp includes at least one electrical input for the first lamp, the end of the second lamp includes at least one electrical input for the second lamp and the coupling element ~~being provided with electrical contacts~~ includes an electrical connection electrically connecting the electrical input of the first lamp to the electrical input of the second lamp.
11. (Canceled) The coupling element as claimed in claim 9, the coupling element being provided with terminals for an electrical power supply voltage.
12. (Canceled) The coupling element as claimed in claim 9, the coupling element having means for mounting on a lamp carrier.
13. (Canceled) The coupling element as claimed in claim 1, the coupling element being in two parts.

14. (Canceled) An illumination system ~~having at least two elongate lamps and at least one coupling element having the features of claim 1, a respective end of the at least two lamps being arranged in the at least one coupling element.~~ comprising:  
a first lamp and a second lamp, each lamp having a respective exterior wall and a respective end, and  
a coupling element having an interior wall defining a receptacle volume having a first region conforming to the exterior wall of the first lamp adjacent the end of the first lamp; and having a second region conforming to the exterior wall of the second lamp adjacent the end of the second lamp; the coupling element retaining the end of the first lamp end adjacent the end of the second lamp; wherein the first region further includes a light reflective surface facing the end of the first lamp and the second region further includes a light reflective surface facing the end of the second lamp; the receptacle further defining a light transmissive aperture commonly adjacent to the end of the first lamp and to the end of the second lamp receiving light from the first region and the second region.
15. (Canceled) The illumination system as claimed in claim 14, the end sides of the at least two lamps being arranged within the coupling element as near as possible to one another without touching one another.
16. (Canceled) The illumination system as claimed in claim 15, the end sides of the at least two lamps being arranged within the coupling element with a mutual distance of approximately  $a = 1 \text{ mm}$ .
17. (Canceled) The illumination system as claimed in claim 14, the coupling element having a stop, which defines a minimum mutual distance between the end sides of the two lamps.
18. (Canceled) The illumination system as claimed in claim 14, the at least two lamps being aperture lamps.

19. (Canceled) The illumination system as claimed in claim 14, the at least two lamps being dielectrically impeded discharge lamps.
20. (Canceled) The illumination system as claimed in claim 14, at least one first lamp being provided with a respective coupling element at its two ends, in which coupling elements is arranged, in turn, a respective end of a second and a third lamp, and the electrodes of the first lamp being connected to the electrodes of the second lamp via the electrical contacts of a coupling element.

CLAIM STATUS:

- Claims 1: (Currently amended)  
Claims 2 - 9: (Canceled)  
Claims 10: (Currently amended)  
Claims 11 - 13: (Canceled)  
Claims 14: (Currently amended)  
Claims 15 - 20: (Canceled)